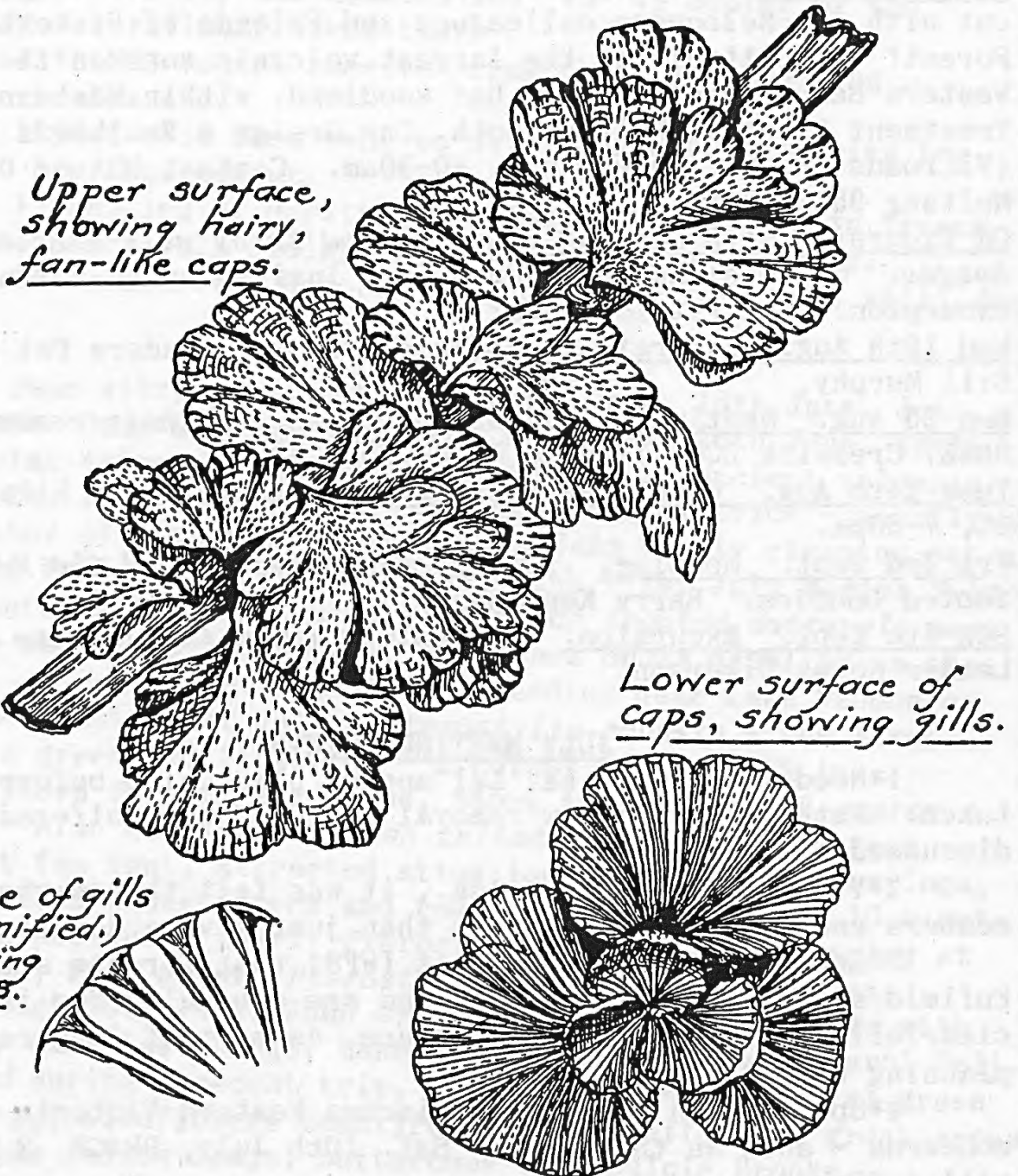


# Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Inc

August 1999



***Schyzophyllum commune***

**POSSIBLY LETHAL,**

**PROBABLY IN YOUR BACKYARD !**

**From Victorian Toadstools and Mushrooms by J. H. Willis**

### DIARY DATES

Fri 6th Aug. Meeting. *Mosses, Lichens and liverworts.* Gary Cheers, Maryborough Field Naturalists Club.

Sun 8th Aug. Excursion. *Creswick Miners' Trail.* Leader Brian Gavin, club member. We enjoyed Brian's talk last year, now we can experience the real thing!

Sun 15th Aug. Take Your Pick!

FNCV Excursion. *Mt Cottrell and Pinkerton Forest.* Enjoy a day out with our Melbourne colleagues and Friends of Pinkerton Forest! Mt Cottrell is the largest volcanic cone on the Western Basalt Plain. Grey box woodland, within Western Water Treatment Plant at Melton South. Cnr Greigs & Faulkners Rd, (Vicroads 78, C6. Melway p7), 10-30am. Contact BDA or Dennis Meltzer 9523 1853.

OR Excursion with Geelong FNC. *The Ted Errey walk - Brisbane Ranges.* Our Geelong colleagues have invited us to attend their excursion. See Pat for details.

Wed 18th Aug. Excursion. *Enfield Forest.* Leaders Pat and Bill Murphy.

Mon 23 Aug. Meeting. *Willows in creeks and their removal.* DNRE, Creswick LCC, 1-30 to 4-30, cost \$20.

Tues 24th Aug. Committee Meeting. Carol Hall's, , 7-30pm.

Fri 3rd Sept. Meeting. *Cocos/Keeling Island and the Red-footed Boobies.* Barry Kentish BU.

Sun 5th Sept. Excursion. *Fryerstown (with Castlemaine FNC).* Leader Norma Dikerson.

### JULY MEETING POINTS

1\*Need to inspect Lal Lal anchor plant site before action taken. Methods for willow removal and weed control/eradication discussed.

2\*Vic. National Parks Ass., it was felt that maybe members and/or club join rather than just give a donation.

3\*Report from John Endacott (WFS) that forests such as Enfield are rated as low grade, and are scheduled for intensive clearfell logging in the near future, as part of long range planning by DNRE.

4\*Special RFA meeting to discuss Western Victoria concerns - such as the above. Sat. 10th July, BRACE, 9.00am till 4.00pm.

5\*Mid month excursion to inspect Lal Lal anchor plant site and to come up with ideas and policy for management.

6\*Letter of thanks from Margaret Rotheram, she also gave details of the Shire of Maroondah refusing clearance permission for a site which was the only known location of a rare orchid.



7\*Information received from Greg Binns about the Belmont HS camp in the Otways. He also donated two of Kirstens textbooks - "Elements of Mineralogy" and a botany book.

8\*Reply received from Ballarat City Council regarding our recent letter concerning Lake Esmond.

9\*Further details given about the VFNCA Sunraysia campout.

10\*Peter Fry has donated the '78-'79 copies of the Geelong Naturalists' newsletter.

11\*LINCS report received from their June meeting - Soapworks Dam etc.

12\*Get well card sent to Helen Burgess, following her recent hip replacement.

13\*Meeting of Heritage Commission to be held in Trench Room, contact July Widley regarding future activities.

14\*Treasurer's Report - OK, but some room rent still due.

### FIELD REPORTS

*Swan* sitting on nest, Buninyong Gong, 16th June, Joan Andrews. Same swan sitting with 3 *cygnets*, 20th June, Kevin and Brian Andrews. *Pyrope Garnets* found in ancient volcanic pipe, 2nd July, being drilled in Meredith district - usually an indicator of diamonds! A pair of *galahs* busily cleaning out a nesting hollow, 2nd July, Lyndsay Fink. 1st July *Winter Swamp* now contains pools of water with *black fronted dotterels* seen on the mud flats and approx. 100 *black ducks* dabbling in the pools. *Black tailed native hens* feeding near Lake Wendouree with swamphens, 1st July. *Pterostylis robusta* - the large striped greenhood flowering - a colony of about 12 in Campelltown Forest, 23rd June. Story told of hooked *osprey chick*. Alan Morrison. *Brush tailed possum* released from exhaust fan vent, attracted attention of sparrows, starlings, New Holland honey eaters and red wattle birds during 10 minute rest in deciduous tree. *Pterostylis longifolia* flowering at Anglesea, 29th June. *Pterostylis concinna* flowering at Inverleigh 30th June, John Gregurke. Five tiny *cygnets* with parents near Lake Lodge, Lake Wendouree, 23rd June, Carol Hall. *Ireland* during a recent trip, apart from the proverbial green of Spring, wildflowers beautiful there - daffodils, great areas of little yellow flags, buttercups etc, Dulcie Brooke.

### THE WATERWATCH PROGRAM

Having Catherine Barnes as our July speaker gave me great pleasure - I taught her science at Mt Clear Secondary College! Florence was pleased as well - her son's sister in law is Catherine's mother!

Water is our most valuable renewable resource. Changes in land management, the clearing of vegetation, and industrial, urban and rural development practices have resulted in a decline in water quality in many areas. It is important that we monitor water quality and hopefully we will be able to make improvements when it is needed.

Waterwatch Victoria is part of a national community water quality monitoring program which has been operating since 1993. Through waterwatch, groups can link with each other, share discoveries, compare findings and build a picture of the health of waterways across Australia. Waterwatch brings together community groups, schools, landholders, local councils, business and river management and water authorities. There are over 60 groups operating in the Central Highlands Region, including Dean Primary School, Ballarat Grammar School, Lexton Landcare Group, Carisbrook Primary School, Langi Kal Prison, Banongill Pastoral Company, Sebastopol Secondary College, Garibaldi Waterwatch Group, Billy Parker and Ullina Landcare Group.

There are six river basin and catchment areas covered by the CHRWWP they are:- 1. The Loddon River Basin (Tullaroop and Cairn Curran catchments); 2. The Barwon River Basin (Yarrowee catchment); 3. The Corangamite Basin (Woody Yaloak catchment); 4. Moorabool River Basin (Lal Lal catchment) and 5. The Hopkins River Basin (Mount Emu catchment).

Waterwatchers collect information on the following:- 1. Site description. 2. Habitat assessment - vegetation, bank erosion and stability, details of riffles, pools and bends (flowing water only). 3. Physical and chemical tests - demonstrated by Catherine at the meeting or on the subsequent visit to Lake Wendouree. (a) Dissolved oxygen by adding a chemical reagent and noting the pinkness of the resulting solution. (b) pH - acidity or alkalinity - using a hand held meter. (c) Electrical conductivity - which measures salinity - also using a hand held meter. (d) Turbidity - suspended solids - measured by pouring a sample of the water into a long tube, until you can no longer see the pattern on the bottom of the tube. (e) Soluble phosphate by adding dilute sulphuric acid to a sample of the water, followed by methyl blue and then estimating the resultant blueness of the solution. All of the equipment and reagents are in the "school kit", which costs \$560 and can be borrowed by waterwatchers. 4.

Macroinvertebrate survey - a collecting net is used to collect macroinvertebrates in the water body being surveyed.

Some interesting points were raised about the testing:-

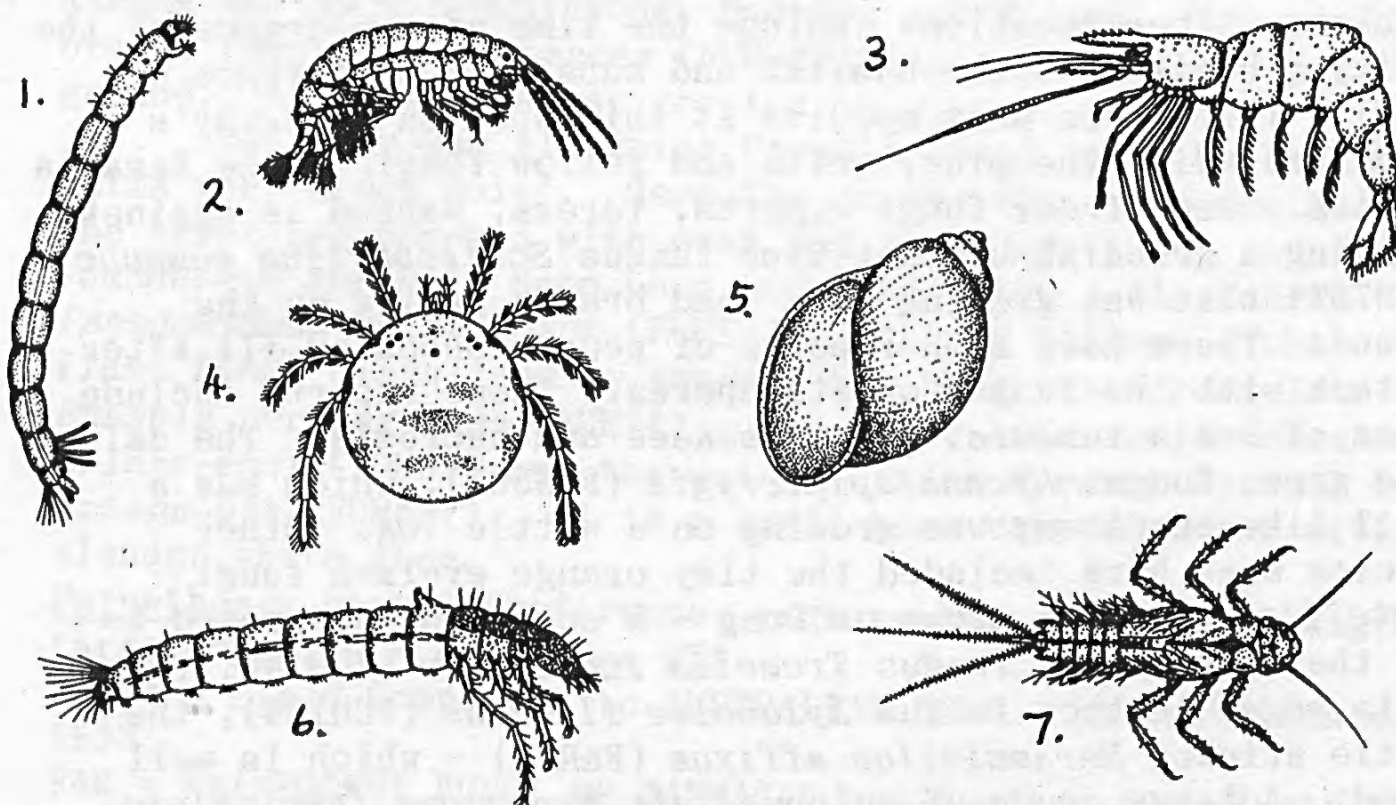
1. The turbidity tube was designed in Australia and is now



exported to the USA. 2. The conductivity of Lake Wendouree is very good, only 460 EC units, water from Maryborough had a reading of 6000 EC units -and it was turbid! 3. Canadian Creek was very turbid after recently being "cleaned out"! Burrumbete Creek has a phosphorous level too high to measure using the standard test. Phosphorous levels in the lake are high on Mondays - not because its washday but because of all the people washing their cars over the weekend!

A few other points were raised, the PITS scheme is stencilling messages onto drain pits and the carp problem is being assessed using a tag and release scheme.

On Thursday, 8th July, interested people attended Catherine's session at the Lake. It would seem that Ballarat is not very good for the Lake. Between the SE corner, where water enters from the Gong, and Lake Lodge the dissolve oxygen decreased from 10 to 6mg/l. Also there was a stunning change in the macroinvertebrates. At the SE corner a few sweeps yielded 2 mayfly nymphs, 10 caddis-fly larvae, a few amphipods and shrimps, 2 bladder or tadpole snails -and what do you notice about the shell? By contrast The Lodge area yielded 5 water mites, 1 amphipod, 1 water beetle and several blood worms - which indicated a noticeable decline in water quality from the inlet to the Lodge.



1. Bloodworm, larva of gnat or midge 2. Amphipod, side swimmer 3. Shrimp 4. Water mite 5. Bladder or tadpole snail. *Fam. physidae* 6. Caddis fly larva 7. Mayfly nymph. Pictures from "Freshwater Invertebrates", by Ralph Miller/Gould League.

To find out more the internet address is

<http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au>

- or ring Catherine at CHW, 5320 3243, better still volunteer to be a waterwatcher!

And the shell? -well its sinistral! (see NLS Mar, Apr and May 1998) - so take note Peter, we didn't have to go to the beach, they were right under our nose all the time! BDA

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### HUNTING FUNGI IN THE WOMBAT FOREST.

On a fine cold day on July 4th our excursion was to the Wombat Forest to look at fungi. We were fortunate in having people from Melbourne University and the Herbarium who specialized in the study of fungi to answer our questions. First stop was near Barkstead where we saw large perennial bracket fungi - *Fomes robustus* (WIL72) growing on a gum tree. Green goblins - *Dermocybe austroveneta* (FUH31T), and orange jelly fungi were also present.

At our next stop along McCarthy's Road, Brian Andrews gave a talk about a project called Fungimap. Fungimap is a collaborative project between professional and amateur mycologists and naturalists to gather information about the distribution of fungi throughout Australia. The distribution of even the most well known species of Australian fungi is poorly known. Research questions addressed by Fungimap include the scale, patterns and limits of distribution of targeted species. Other questions include the time of appearance of the fruiting bodies and the habitat and substrate preference of fungi. There were many species at this spot on McCarthy's Road, including the pink, white and yellow fungi of the *Ramaria* species. One of our fungi experts, Teresa, warned us against touching a greenish bracket type fungus *Schizophyllum commune* (FUH76T) that was growing on a dead branch laying on the ground. There have been reports of people becoming ill after contact with the fungus or its spores. These reports include cases of brain tumours, skin diseases and necrosis. The dainty lime green fungus *Mycena epipterygia* (FUH58T), which has a smell like cucumber, was growing on a wattle log. Other species seen here included the tiny orange eyelash fungi *Scutellina* sp which grows on Dung - a specimen was posted to NZ, the white Jelly fungus *Tremella fuciformis* (FUH140T), the white edged leather fungus *Xylobolus illudens* (FUH136), the little stinker *Marasmiellus affixus* (F&R49) - which is well named! A large group of sulphur tuft *Hypholoma fasciculare* (F&R37) that have sulphur coloured gills, and the purple fungus *Cortinarius archeri* (FUH30). Also at this location we observed the beautiful mouth puff-ball *Calostoma fuscum* (FUH94T), orange jelly *Heterotextus* sp and bird's nest fungi *Nidula emodensis* (FUH98).



On Brickhouse Road under pine trees there was a group of fly agaric fungi *Amanita muscaria* (YOU50T). Some of these white spotted red capped fungi were ten inches across.

Werribee Track flora and fauna special reserve reference area was our next stop. There have been reports of a powerful owl and greater gliders in the area. The hallucinogenic magic mushroom *Psilocybe sp subaeruginosa?* (YOU107) that has a brown cap and blue tinge on the stem was growing near the track. Other species seen here included one of the *laccaria sp.* Also there was the jelly like *Ascocoryne sarcoides* (FUH144T), *Paxillus muelleri* (YOU102), *Butyraces callybria* (=Collybia abutyracea?) (YOU57) and *Cortinarius sinapicolour*. Fresh wombat droppings were seen near the track. Later we saw a wombat hole under a tall gum tree. There was a large area of excavated soil and under a tree root was a hole about two feet tall and one foot wide.

We had lunch at Nolan Creek picnic area. Tall messmate, candlebark and mountain grey eucalypts grow here. Nearby there is a big sawdust heap that remains after a sawmill operated there earlier this century. The fungus *Mycena hispida* (F&R51) which has hairy grass like 'roots' was growing here.

After lunch we travelled along Blackwood Ridge Road to the McLauchlin Lookout. From here we could see the Dandenong Ranges and Mounts Buninyong, Macedon and Wilson. The small orange *Omphalina chromacea* (FUH62T) was growing here on the ground. A cup fungus was growing on dung.

Last stop was alongside Paradise Road, an area Brian calls the 'Green Hole'. Here the ground slopes to the South, the trees are covered with moss and there are ferns and Hazel Pomaderris shrubs. Seen here were the spiny jelly fungus *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum* (FUH142T), bright yellows clubs of the flame fungi *Clavulinopsis amoena*, the bright red russula *Russula persanguinea* (FUH74), the horse-hair agaric *Marasmius crinis-equi* (YOU91) and the dainty Pixies Parasol *Mycena interrupta* (FUH59T). It is a small blue capped fungus with slender white stem.

Parentheses contain reference, page number and T if a fungimap target species - data from BDA.

FUH = A Field Companion to AUSTRALIAN FUNGI, by Bruce Fuhrer, 1993

F&R = RAINFOREST FUNGI OF TASMANIA and South - East Australia, by Bruce Fuhrer and Richard Robinson

YOU = COMMON AUSTRALIAN FUNGI a naturalist's guide, by Tony Young, 1994

WIL = VICTORIAN TOADSTOOLS AND MUSHROOMS, by James Willis, 1963  
Les Hanrahan p6

...and the 'wombat stayers' popped into Spargo Creek Reserve, dodging kangaroos, for lemon flavoured spa water at 6-15pm...in the dark! What's more the comment from Rod Jones was that "any decent mycologist would still be out there, searching with a torch!"

Ed

### LAL LAL AND THE WHIPSTICK

The big problem at Lal Lal is the removal of the willows. The majority of the members present considered the job too big for the FNCB membership. Negotiations are continuing. When we arrived at the whipstick, 800Ha of state forest, east of Mt Egerton, it was time for lunch. By the time we got lunch out it was pouring with rain. After lunch we headed to the Eastern half which is a Special Protection Zone (= no logging etc), of retained habitat. I made the mistake of driving past the picnic area and almost finished in the creek! After pushing me out everybody decided they had suffered enough and headed for the comfort of home. The eastern end had potential and I intend to return in better weather.

Brian Andrews

### JULY POSER - HELEN'S EGGS

Many eggs are spherical (frog etc), because this shape has the highest ratio of volume to surface area. Many bird eggs are oval, probably this helps passage through the cloaca. Tear shaped eggs are probably even more streamlined, but tear shaped eggs also roll around in circles, therefor decreasing the risk of eggs falling out of nests! Birds which nest in very precarious situations tend to have very pointed eggs, birds which nest in hollows tend to have oval eggs.

Helen Burgess

### AUGUST POSER - PRETTY PEACOCKS AND MOULTING WRENS

An old favourite of mine! What are the colours of a peacock's tail feathers, of special interest is the central spot! Can you explain the formation of the colours and does the explanation throw new light on our moulting wrens?

BDA

-----\*\*\*----- FNCB -----\*\*\*-----

Meetings are held at the Ballarat Horticulture centre, corner of Gregory and Gillies Streets, ie. the NW corner of the Botanic Gardens, commencing at 7-30pm

Excursions depart from Creswick Plaza at 9-30 am, unless specified otherwise.

Committee: Claire Dalnan (President).. , Greg Binns (Vice President).. , Pat Murphy (Secretary).. , John Gregurke (Treasurer).. , Brian Andrews (Editor).. , Helen Burgess, Maureen Christie, Lyndsay Fink, Carol Hall, John Mildren.